GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1982
ANSWERED ON:23.07.2014
US PROFESSIONAL VISAS
Ajmal Maulana Badruddin

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the US has allegedly discriminated against Indians in the grant of professional visas (H-1B) over the last few years;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the percentage of rejection for Indians was high as compared to other countries;

(d) if so, the details in this regard;

(e) whether the Government has taken up this issue with the US Government at the bilateral level; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the outcome thereto?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (GEN. RETD. V. K. SINGH)

(a) to (f) Government is aware of the procedural difficulties faced by Indian professionals in obtaining US visas, and the impact of measures such as increases in visa fees. Government also recognizes that visa policy and procedures are the prerogative of the receiving country and that the US policies on visas are not India- specific. However, the facilitation of trans-border movement of professionals and business travellers has a trade-related aspect as well. Therefore, the Government uses every opportunity, including during trade-related meetings, to raise with the US Government India's concerns over difficulties faced by Indian companies in obtaining appropriate visas for their professionals. An India-US Consular Dialogue was set up in 2010 to address Indian concerns on these and other related issues.

In response to the concerns raised by the Government at various meetings with US officials, US authorities have pointed out that India was the largest recipient of US H-1B visas in Fiscal Year 2011 and 2012. They have noted that out of the total H-1B petitions approved by the US Government globally in FY 2012, nearly 64% were issued to applicants whose country of birth was India. This marked an increase from nearly 58 % in FY 2011. In absolute terms, in FY 2011, out of a total of 2,69,563 H-1B petitions approved by the US Government worldwide, 1,56,317 were from India. In FY 2012, out of a total of 2,62, 569 H-1B petitions approved, 1,68,367 were from India.

Since there remain significant concerns among Indian firms regarding the process of securing visas for professionals, Government continues to reflect these concerns with the US side.